

The Ideal Husband

Rosalind Intrater

ALTHOUGH PSYCHIATRISTS CLAIM that a girl's first love is her father, they do admit that the "affair" is on the unconscious level. When Daughter grows up a bit, however, and takes a good look at Papa, (before his morning shave, for instance, or when the bills come in) she ordinarily decides that she wants something better than Mother got. But what?

From that point on, she becomes subject to dreamy spells, asks embarrassing questions at home, regards her parents with ineffable pity, and reacts violently to the word "man." At such time it is customary for knowing adults to bestow new labels upon her. Depending on their own dispositions, they will refer to her as "growing up," "adolescent," or "difficult"; or else they will shake their heads perplexedly and wonder "What in the world is the matter with her?" and alas! alas! many will even scold her. But what can she do, poor girl? Her curiosity has been aroused; and who does not know the potency of feminine curiosity?

Life around her seldom yields the heroic example she seeks. Stable married men are, of course, regarded as "old fogies," and their enduring and endearing qualities dismissed as "dull." Her sources of information are therefore limited to magazines, books, and the movies. Some devoted attention to these media and Lo! the image of the "Ideal" appears. What she wants is Tyrone Power, Rhett Butler, and Sheik of Araby—all in one. Today's Cinderella craves no shining armor and white horse; they are too old-fashioned (dreadful word). Her Prince Charming will slither up to the door in a red Cadillac convertible! And thus prepared she goes forth to seek her mate.

What happens next depends on her eye-sight. If she is myopic, she may see the halo of enchantment over Johnny, next door; or else, romance may shine on the glamour-boy from out of town. But whichever one she marries—what a jolt! One desolate morning she will wake up and open both eyes. She will take a good look at her husband before he shaves and then watch his face when the bill for her new hat arrives. Poof!—another addition to the divorce statistics.

What milady needs, of course, is a realistic orientation about what constitutes the average man and what the odds are against his exceeding the limitations of the definition. Also helpful is reflection upon the idea that Man too cherishes a vision of Princess Charming, and that he is equally capable of sustaining a shock at his wife's inevitable failure to match the specifications. A wholesome attitude for both

of them could be facilitated by a bit of accurate self-evaluation and the simple realizations that one should ask no better than one can give, and that error—being human—is both male and female.

As for the "ideal" husband—or wife—the existence of that species is a question for dispute. No human being is the same at all times and in all company. A shrewish woman can make the mildest man lose his temper, as a tactful, considerate wife can soothe the most irate of husbands. People tend to absorb and reflect the conditions and attitudes around them. In flesh and blood people, no ideal of abstract qualities can exist *per se*, ready to spring into flawless behavior on all occasions and in response to all provocations.

True marriage has been defined as "that relationship between man and woman in which the independence is equal, the dependence mutual, and the obligation reciprocal." Such a concept suggests that prospective mates should steer clear of tyrants, parasites, ego-centrics, and dead-beats. But presupposing a fairly equal, or complementary match of characters and personalities, the rest is up to the couple; and a girl's best recipe for an ideal husband is to be an ideal wife.

A Flirtation

Judy Job

HE STOOD OUTSIDE the bakery, gazing wistfully at the people treading their way in and out of the shop. He had been standing this way for some time when his eyes fell upon a girl jauntily coming out.

It seemed rather queer that he had not noticed her enter, for he had been watching everyone closely. With his first glance at her, he concluded that she was different from the rest. As she walked past him, she left in her path a most enchanting smile. He stood staring after her. She must have felt it, for she turned and smiled, this time rather amusedly. That smile did it. He made up his mind then and there to follow her.

She suddenly turned into an alley. He did likewise, and, as the alley was not at all well-lighted, he realized that now she might appreciate his protection. She was walking more rapidly, and he practically had to run to keep up with her.

While he was trying to make up his mind whether to go up to her, she turned into the yard of a little house on the corner, ran up the steps, bolted through the door and slammed it, just as he entered the yard. That certainly was discouraging, but he did not give up so easily. As he started up the steps, the door flew open, and the girl stuck her head out. She was laughing.

"Here, boy," she said. With a joyful bark, he ran up the steps and into the warm house.